

(1) Jacob Lance

Mary Jane Thompson

(2) E B White

(3) Samuel Thompson

(2) Wm Ford  
(3) John Cornelius

Mrs. George Henry (Margaret) Bunnell  
Mrs. Christian (Amelia) Burgener  
Mrs. Sidney (Susanna) McCarrell  
Mrs. Hyrum (Emma) Shelton  
Mrs. Joseph (Elizabeth) McCarrell

SAMUEL THOMPSON AND  
MARY J. MARSH THOMPSON



Mary Jane Marsh Thompson, daughter of Eliphus Marsh and Hannah Husted Marsh, was born in Lewisville, Kentucky, September 1, 1829. Her people were early converts to the Mormon Church. They went through all the trials of the Saints in Missouri and Nauvoo. Mary Jane enjoyed the acquaintance and close association of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his family. She was a third cousin of the Prophet and was baptized by him. She was in Nauvoo at the time of the martyrdom and she saw the bodies of the Prophet and his brother, Hyrum, as they lay in the Mansion House.

While in Nauvoo she met and married Jacob Lance. In 1849, Mr. Lance, with his wife and two children started the long journey west. While in Winter Quarters their third child was born. Mary Jane's father died before they left Nauvoo; her mother and family traveled with them across the plains. They reached the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1850. The Marsh and Lance families had a difficult journey. They used their milk cows to help transport them and their goods.

Jacob Lance took his family to American Fork after reaching Utah. There two more children were born to them. Mr. Lance died in American Fork, leaving his widow with four young children. After a number of years Mrs. Lance moved to Midway, where she met and married E. B. White. To this union were born three children. Mr. White died from the effects of a sunstroke. After a few years of widowhood, she married Samuel

Thompson of Midway. He was President of the High Priest Quorum. They had two children. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson lived happily together until Brother Thompson died at the age of ninety. By this time Mary Jane's family was pretty well grown up. Her children were a great comfort to her. She took up spinning, using both the spinning wheel and weaving on a hand loom. She enjoyed making clothes for her family. They were all warm and neatly clad in garments of her making from wool cleaned, carded, spun, woven, and sewn by her own hands. She also wove many carpets. Into her work she not only put rags stretched at the fire side, but something of her own sympathy and love. She was expert at braiding straw and making straw hats.

She died in Park City, October 26, 1913, at the age of 84.

Children of Mary Jane Marsh Lance White Thompson:

First Marriage

Hannah Melissa Lance, married Moroni Blood;

Orson Lance, married Melvina Love;

Mahalia Lance, married John Peterson;

Myron Eliphus Lance, married Elvira Wing;

Olive Lucretia Lance, married Mr. Ludlow, later Mr. Williams, later Mr. Coffin.

Second Marriage

George C. White, married Jane Bectell;

Loema Ann White, married Abram Shields, later Robert Mitchell, later Mr. Woodcock;

Alice White, married John R. Vail, later Samuel O'Neil.

Third Marriage

Samuel Thompson, married Eliza Blood;

Mary Jane Thompson, married Christian Mitchell.

Mrs. George Henry (Margaret) Bunnell  
 Mrs. Christian (Amelia) Burgener  
 Mrs. Sidney (Susanna) McCarrell  
 Mrs. Hyrum (Emma) Shelton  
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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*Seek Ye First...*

Religion was the mainstay in the lives of the early settlers along Provo Valley's Snake Creek. Nearly all of them left the security of homes and opportunities in the East and in foreign lands to cast their lots with the growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Through persecution and bitterness they had suffered in Missouri and Illinois, and now they were giving their lives to establish cities where they and their families could enjoy religious freedom.

Life was hard along Snake Creek, but never hard enough that the work couldn't be accomplished in six days of work a week. The Sabbath Day was reserved for worshipping, studying the Gospel and resting for the rigors of another week. Even before the first meeting house was built in the upper settlement in 1862 the people were meeting in each others' homes for worship services.

Just before the first meeting house was completed in July, 1862, Church authorities in the valley called Sidney H. Epperson to serve as Snake Creek's first presiding elder. He and his counselors, John Fausett and Samuel Thompson were sustained on June 26, 1862. These brethren also presided over the lower settlement until 1864 when David Van Wagoner was called as presiding elder there. His counselors were Andrew Hamilton and David Wood.

In 1866 because of Indian trouble the Saints of both settlements were advised to join ranks as one settlement in order to have the necessary strength for protection. A compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements and the settlers, fortified in, called the site Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was the survey of the townsite. Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carried the tape, Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton, Sr., the pegs, and within a few days Midway was laid out in ample blocks with the public square in the center.

Around the central square seventy-five primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other while in some instances strong panels of upright posts made palisades between cabins built slightly apart, the whole forming an impregnable wall around the square. Small rear windows were to serve as portholes in case of attack. The fort was conducted under military law, having officers and picket patrols, arising and doing certain work at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

These noble and Godfearing people now sensed the happiness of well provided security and felt they would be able to repel any attack of the Redman. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked; and when it was time to disband after a treaty had been made with the Indians and they had gone to live on reservations, most of the people decided to remain here. The upper and lower settlements were never rebuilt. The old fort was reserved by the town as a public square where meeting houses, schools, and stores were built.

Today a beautiful monument and marker erected by the Daughters of the Pioneers marks the scene and describes in a meager way the pioneering of this beautiful valley.

Under date of February 4, 1867, David F. Van Wagoner wrote from Midway that the winter had been comparatively mild with only 20 inches of snow and the thermometer only 4 degrees below zero at sunrise January 1, 1867. The health of the people was good and the past winter had not witnessed a single drunken person, nor heard of any riotous conduct in the whole valley, mainly because there were no distilleries or liquor shops.

The first grasshoppers were seen at Midway July 27, 1867.

December 29, 1867 Joseph S. Murdock was released as Presiding Bishop of Provo Valley and Abram Hatch was sustained in his place.

May 26, 1868 the first missionary from Midway, James Wooley Fisher, was set apart for a mission to Great Britain. He returned in 1869.

March 11, 1868 Sidney H. Epperson was reappointed by Bishop Abram Hatch as Presiding Elder of Midway with David F. Van Wagoner and Ira Norton Jacob as his counselors. The former counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson were released.

In 1868-69 a substantial rock building was erected at Midway on the southeast corner of the public square in which a good school was soon commenced. The house was built by taxation and was used for religious and other meeting purposes until 1874.

April 10, 1870 Sidney H. Epperson and counselors were released, and Henry Samuel Alexander was appointed Presiding Elder over the Midway Branch with David F. Van Wagoner and John Huber counselors.

In 1871 John Huber, the second missionary to be called from Midway, was called to the Swiss and German Mission, and Ira N. Jacob succeeded John Huber as second counselor to Henry S. Alexander. There were no further changes in the presiding officers until the organization of a ward in 1877.

In 1872 Elder George C. Lambert visited Midway, and he wrote the following interesting item which appeared in the Deseret News September 25, 1872:

"I arrived at this interesting little town last evening and contrary



was crude it was still another step forward in making the new valley more livable.

The time of planting and harvesting in 1861 came and went and the snows of another winter fell on more than 50 families who comprised the Snake River settlements. Then as the summer of 1862 arrived there was sufficient community spirit between the two groups that the first meeting house in the area was constructed. It was built of logs with a dirt roof and floor and was erected in the upper settlement, or Mound City. It was completed in time for the July 24th celebration. As it was nearing completion, the Presiding Bishop of the valley, Joseph S. Murdock of Heber, appointed Sidney Harmon Epperson to be presiding elder of the upper settlement. The lower settlement of more than 20 families was designated as a teacher's district of the upper settlement.

Elder Epperson was sustained in a meeting on June 26, 1862. He chose as his counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson. His calling as presiding elder proved him to be a man of faith and courage. He felt the responsibility of leadership and strove for unity among his people.

Side by side he worked with them in grubbing willows and sage brush, breaking land and making irrigation ditches, constructing roads, digging dugways to the canyons for fire wood, blasting rock and bridging streams.

Pioneering for the early Snake Creek settlers was a full-time job, 24 hours every day. However, by 1866 the lives of the people were further complicated with Indian problems. Restless red-men resented the encroachment by white men on their favorite hunting and trapping grounds, and often threatened the security of the new settlers. So, early in 1866 plans were made to abandon the rambling settlements along Snake Creek.

The axiom that there is "strength in numbers" and the wisdom of compromise are probably the two most important factors underlying the establishment of Midway, the thriving community that grew out of the two Snake Creek settlements.

The Indian troubles of 1866 made the settlers and leaders aware that the sprawling Snake Creek settlements would be highly vulnerable to the type of attacks being used by the Indians.

So it was that the upper and lower settlements on Snake Creek were advised to come together as one community. Tradition has it, however, that a warm contest ensued as to which community should join which. Each saw the virtue of their own position and desired not to move. However, a compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements, and the new site was called, appropriately enough, Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was a survey of the area. With Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carrying the tapes and Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton Sr., the pegs, the city of Mid-

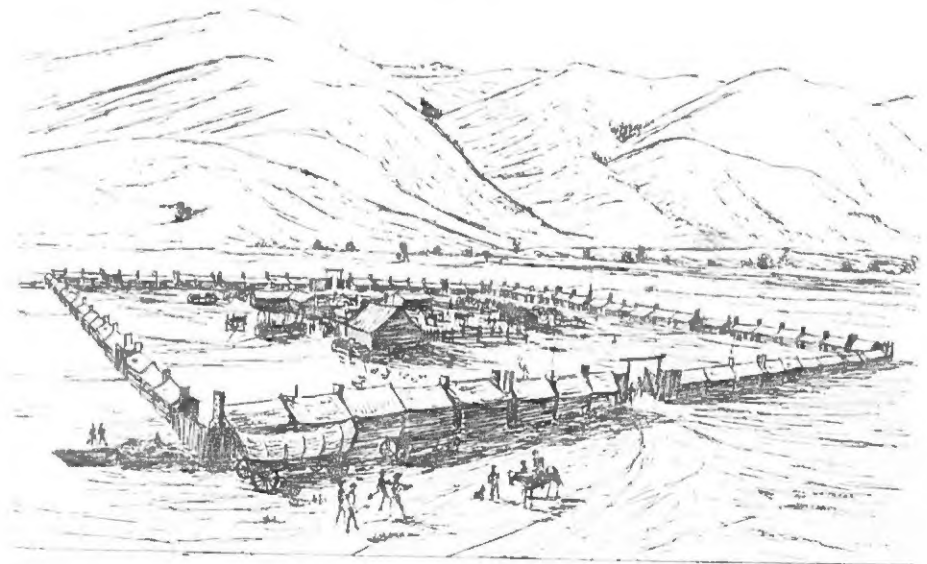
way was soon laid out with a public square in the center and ample city blocks surrounding the square.

Then began the work of "forting in." Around the central square some 75 primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other, while between others were erected strong panels of upright posts. In this manner an impregnable wall was formed around the square. Small windows were provided at strategic points to serve as portholes in case of attack. Life in the new fort-string was conducted under military law, with officers and picket patrols acting at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

Fort Midway brought to the people a sense of well provided security, and by bringing them close together helped develop a new happiness and community spirit. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked, though the settlers were ready to defend their lives and homes at any time. The fact that the fort was not molested speaks highly of the ability of the pioneers to cooperate in community projects.

The first 75 families in the old fort and their locations are as follows:

From the southwest to the northwest corner: Sidney H. Epperson, Jeremiah Robey, J. A. Robey, Simon Higgenbotham, George Snyder, Thomas Ritter, Edwin Bronson, Samuel Thompson, Ira Jacobs, Washington Clift, Moroni Blood, John Huber, John Wintch, George Dabbling,



An artist's sketch by Bill Whitaker depicting the establishment of Fort Midway in 1866.